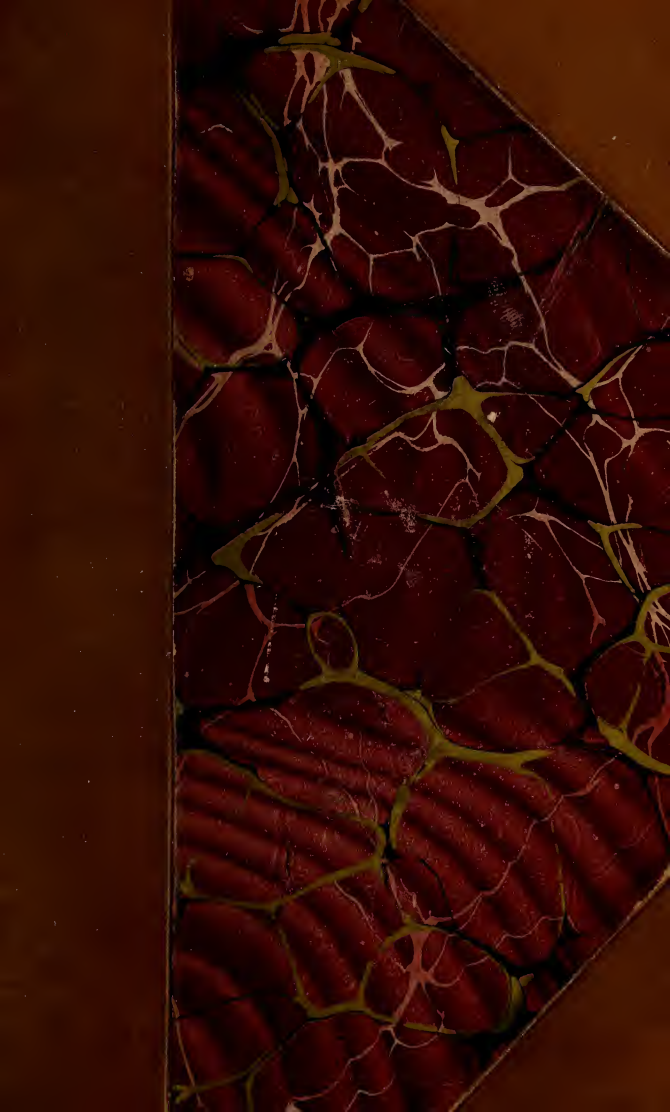




RB 75722



**Library
of the
University of Toronto**

1016
NEW AND IMPROVED SERIES,

No. 91.

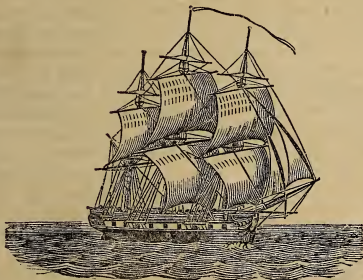
THE
LIFE AND VOYAGES

OF

THE APOSTLE PAUL.

BY THE

REV. JOHN FLEETWOOD, D.D.



GLASGOW:
PRINTED FOR THE BOOKSELLERS.
1851.

Price One Penny.

NEW AND IMPROVED EDITION

OF

THE

LIFE AND VOYAGES

OF

THE APOSTLE PAUL

BY

REV. JOHN PIERCE, D.D.



LONDON

PRINTED FOR THE PROPRIETOR

BY

JOHN PIERCE, D.D.

THE LIFE OF

THE APOSTLE PAUL.

THIS great apostle of the Gentiles was a native of Tarsus, and a descendant from the ancient stock of Abraham. He was born about two years before the blessed Jesus, and belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, the youngest son of Jacob, who thus prophesied of him: "Benjamin shall ravine as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey; and at night he shall divide the spoil;" a prophetic character which Tertullian and others will have to be accomplished in our apostle. For, in his youth, or *morning of his days*, he persecuted the churches, destroying the flock of the Almighty; he *devoured the prey*: in his declining age, or *evening of his day*, he became a physician of the nations, feeding and distributing with the greatest care and assiduity the sheep of Christ; that great shepherd of Israel, he *divideth the spoil*.

Tarsus, the place of the apostle's nativity, was the metropolis of Cilicia, and situated about three hundred miles distant from Jerusalem; it was exceedingly rich and populous, and a Roman municipium, or free corporation, invested with the privileges of Rome by the two first emperors, as a reward for the citizens' firm adherence to the Cæsars, in the rebellion of Crassus. St. Paul was therefore born a Roman citizen, and he often pleads this privilege on his trials.

It was common for the inhabitants of Tarsus to send their children into other cities, for learning and improvement; especially to Jerusalem, where they were so numerous, that they had a synagogue of their own, called the Synagogue of the Cilicians. To this capital Paul was also sent, and brought up at the school of the eminent Rabbi, Gamaliel, in the most exact knowledge of the law of Moses. Nor did he fail to profit by the instructions of the great master; for he so diligently conformed himself to its precepts, that, he asserts of himself, that touching the righteousness of the law, he was blameless, and defied even his enemies to allege any thing to the contrary, even in his youth. He joined himself to the sect of the Pharisees, the most strict order of the Jewish religion; but at the same time, the

proudest, and the greatest enemies to Christ and his holy religion.

With regard to his double capacity, of Jewish extraction and Roman freedom, he had two names, Saul and Paul, the former Hebrew and the latter Latin. It was common for the descendants of Benjamin to give the name Saul to their children, ever since the time of the first king of Israel, who was chosen out of that tribe; and Paul was a name as common among the Romans. We must also consider his trade of tent-making as a part of his education; it being a constant practice of the Jews to bring up their children to some honest calling, that, in case of necessity, they might provide for themselves by the labour of their own hands.

Saul having obtained a thorough knowledge of the science cultivated by the Jews, and being naturally of a very hot and fiery temper, became a great champion of the law of Moses, and the tradition of the elders, which he considered as zeal for God. This rendered him impatient of all opposition to the doctrine and tenets he had imbibed, and a vehement blasphemer and persecutor of the Christians, who were reputed the enemies of the Jewish economy. We must not, however, consider him guilty of the pride and hypocrisy of the Pharisees; for he declares that he had ever been careful to act in conformity to the dictates of his conscience, by which he thought himself bound to do "many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." It was, therefore, the prejudices of his education, and the natural warmth of his temper, that excited him to those violent persecutions of the Christians, for which he became so famous.

The first action we find him engaged in, was the disputation he and his countrymen had with the martyr Stephen, with regard to the Messiah. The Christian was too hard for them in the dispute; but they were too powerful for him in their civil interests: for being enraged at his convincing arguments, they carried him before the high priest, who by false accusations condemned him to death. How far Saul was concerned in this cruel action, is impossible to say; all we know is, that he *kept the raiment of them that slew him*.

The storm of persecution against the church being thus begun, it increased prodigiously, and the poor Christians of Jerusalem were miserably harassed and dispersed. In this persecution our apostle was a principal agent, searching all the adjacent parts for the afflicted saints, beating some in the synagogue, inflicting other cruelties, confining some in prisons, and procuring others to be put to death.

Paul having procured from the Sanhedrim, at Jerusalem,

a commission to go to Damascus to apprehend what Christians he could find in that city, and bring them bound to Jerusalem, set out upon his persecuting mission. But when travelling towards Damascus, a miraculous interposition of providence stopped him in his journey. A refulgent light, far exceeding the brightness of the sun, darted upon him: at which both he and his companions were terribly amazed and confounded, and immediately fell prostrate on the ground. While they lay in this state, a voice was heard in the Hebrew language, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" To which Saul replied, "Who art thou, Lord?" And was immediately answered, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

Saul was sufficiently convinced of his folly in having acted against Jesus, and asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" On which Jesus replied, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

The company which were with him heard the voice, but did not see the person who spake from heaven. In all probability they were ignorant of the Hebrew language, and therefore only heard a confused sound: for the apostle himself tells us that, *they heard not the voice of him that spake*; that is, they did not understand what was spoken.

The apostle now arose from the earth, but found himself deprived of sight, the resplendent brightness of the vision being too intense for mortal eyes to behold. His companions, therefore, led him by the hand to the city of Damascus, when he entered the house of Judas, and remained there three days without sight, nor did he either eat or drink, but spent his time in prayer to the Almighty, beseeching him to pardon the sins of his ignorance and blinded zeal.

In the meantime, Christ appeared in a vision to Ananias, a devout man, commanding him to go into a certain street, in the city of Damascus, and inquire in the house of Judas for one Saul of Tarsus, then offering up fervent prayers to the throne of grace. Ananias, though always ready to obey the divine commands, had some suspicion that the conversion of Saul was a snare artfully laid by him against the Christians, and he therefore hesitated. But his fears were quieted by the Saviour himself, who assured him that He had chosen Paul to preach the gospel to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles. Ananias then obeyed the heavenly vision, repaired to the house of Judas, and, laying his hand upon Saul, addressed him in words to this effect:—"That Jesus," said he, "that appeared to thee in the way, hath sent me to restore thy sight, and by the infusion of his spirit, to give

thee the knowledge of those truths which thou hast blindly and ignorantly persecuted ; but who now is willing to receive thee by baptism into his church, and make thee a member of his body.”

This was no sooner said, than there fell from his eyes thick films resembling scales, and he received his sight ; and after baptism conversed with the Christians of Damascus. Nor did he only converse with them ; he also, to the great astonishment of the whole church, preached the gospel to those Christians he came with an intention to destroy, at the same time boldly asserting, *that Jesus was the Son of God* ; and proving it to the Jews, with such demonstrative evidence, that they were confounded, and found it impossible to answer him.

The miraculous convert, at the instance of the divine command, retired into Arabia Petraea, where he received a full revelation of all the mysteries of Christianity ; for he himself declares that he conversed not with flesh and blood. Having preached in several parts of that country some time, he returned again to Damascus, applying himself, with the utmost assiduity, to the great work of the ministry, frequenting the synagogues there, confuting the objections commonly made by the descendants of Jacob against Jesus of Nazareth, and converting great numbers of Jews and Gentiles.

He was remarkably zealous in his preaching, and blessed with an extraordinary method of reasoning, whereby he proved the fundamental points of Christianity beyond exception. This irritated the Jews to the highest degree ; and at length, they prevailed on the governor of Damascus to have him put to death.

In this distress his Christian friends tried every method that offered to procure his escape, and as the gates of the city were strictly guarded, they let him down from the window of a house in a basket over the wall.

Having thus escaped from his malicious persecutors, he repaired to Jerusalem, and on his arrival addressed himself to the church. But they knowing well the temper and principles of the persecutor, shunned his company, till Barnabas brought him to Peter, who was not yet cast into prison, and to James, bishop of Jerusalem, informing them of his miraculous conversion, and that he had preached the gospel with boldness in the synagogues of Damascus ; upon which they gladly received him, and entertained him fifteen days.

During this interval, he was remarkably assiduous in preaching the gospel, and confuting the Hellenist Jews with the greatest courage and resolution. But being warned by God in a vision, that his testimony would not be received at

Jerusalem, he thought proper to depart, and preach the gospel to the Gentiles. Accordingly, being conducted by his brethren to Cesarea Philippi, he set sail for Tarsus, his native city; from whence he was soon after brought by Barnabas to Antioch, to assist in propagating Christianity in that city. In his employment he spent one whole year, and had the satisfaction of seeing the gospel flourish in a very remarkable manner.

It was in this city that the disciples first acquired the name of Christians, before which they were styled Nazarenes; but his appellation soon prevailed all over the world; and the latter was in a few ages almost entirely forgotten.

About this time a terrible famine, foretold by Agabus, happened in several parts of the Roman empire, particularly Judea, which induced the Christians at Antioch to compassionate the miseries of their brethren at Jerusalem. They accordingly raised considerable contributions for their relief, which they sent to the capital of Judea by the hands of Barnabas and Saul, who immediately after executing their commission, returned to Antioch. But while they were performing the public exercises of religion, it was revealed to them by the Holy Ghost, that they should "set apart Barnabas and Saul" to preach the gospel in other places; which was accordingly done, and they were immediately deputed for that service by prayer, fasting, and imposition of hands.

The first place they visited was Saleucia, where they did not continue long, but sailed for Cyprus; and at Salamis, a great city in that island, they preached in the synagogue of the Jews. From hence they removed to Paphos, the residence of Sergius Paulus, the pro-consul of the island, a man of great wisdom and prudence, but miserably seduced by the wicked artifices of *Bar Jesus*, a Jewish impostor, who styled himself Elymas, or the magician, vehemently opposed the apostles, and kept the pro-consul from embracing the faith.

The pro-consul, however, called for the apostles, who, after severely checking Elymas for his malicious opposition to the truth, told him the divine vengeance was now ready to seize upon him, and immediately he was deprived of his sight. This miracle convinced the pro-consul of the truth of the doctrines taught by the apostles, and made him a convert to the faith.

St. Paul, after this remarkable success in Cyprus, repaired to Phrygia in Pamphylia, and taking another with him, in the room of Mark, who was gone to Jerusalem, travelled to Antioch.

Soon after their arrival, they entered the synagogue of the Jews, on the Sabbath-day, and after the reading of the law,

Paul being invited by the rulers of the synagogue, delivered himself in the following manner: "Hearken all ye descendants of Jacob, and ye that fear the Almighty, to the words of my mouth. The God of Israel made choice of our father and loved them, when they had no city of their own to dwell in, but were strangers and slaves in Egypt, bringing them from thence with a mighty hand, and a stretched out arm; fed them in the wilderness forty years, and would not suffer him to rise against them, though they often provoked him in the desert. On their arrival in the land he promised the fathers, he destroyed the nations that inhabited it, and placed them in that faithful country, dividing it to them by lot.

"When they were settled in the land, he gave them judges during four hundred and fifty years, till Samuel the prophet. But on their desiring a king, he placed over them Saul, the son of Kish, a Benjamite, who reigned about forty years. After his death, he placed David on the throne of Israel, giving him this testimony, 'I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.' And according to his promise the Almighty hath raised up to the sons of David, a Saviour, Jesus, *which is Christ the Lord*: the baptism of repentance having been preached before his coming by John. And as his forerunner executed his office, he asked his followers, *Whom think ye that I am?* You must not mistake me for the Messiah; he will soon follow me: but I am not worthy to perform the meanest office for him.

"To you, therefore, ye descendants of Abraham, and all others who fear the Almighty, *is this word of salvation sent*. For the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and rulers of Israel, being ignorant of him, and the voices of the prophets, though read every Sabbath in the synagogues, fulfilled their predictions by condemning the immaculate Son of the Most High. They found, indeed, no fault with him, though they earnestly desired Pilate that he might be slain.

"When every thing that had been written by the prophets concerning him was fulfilled, they took him from the tree, and deposited his body in the chambers of the grave. But death had no power to detain him: his Almighty Father raised him from the habitations of the dead. After which, he was seen during many days by his disciples, who attended him from Galilee, and were the witnesses chosen by Omnipotence, of these great and miraculous works. And we now declare unto you glad tidings, namely, that the promise made by the Almighty to our forefathers, he hath performed to us the children, by raising Jesus from the dead. The prophet

David also said, 'Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee.' He also foretold, that he should return from the chambers of the dust, and no more be subject to corruption: I will give him, said he, the sure mercies of David. And again, 'Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.' Now this prophecy must relate to the Messiah; for David himself, after he had swayed the sceptre of Israel a certain time, fell asleep, was deposited in the chambers of the grave, and his flesh saw corruption: but the great Son of David, whom the Almighty raised from the dead, never saw corruption.

"Be it therefore known unto you, men and brethren, that through this Saviour is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. It is by his merits we are justified from all things, which were impossible by the law of Moses. Be careful, therefore, lest what was foretold by the prophets come upon you. 'Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish: for I work a work in your day, a work which you shall in nowise believe, though a man declare it unto you.'"

This spirited address of the apostle carried with it its own weight, and obtained, from the converted Jews, a request that it should again be delivered the ensuing Sabbath; when almost the whole city flocked to hear the apostle; at which the Jews were filled with envy, and contradicted Paul, uttering many blasphemous expressions against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. But their opposition could not daunt the apostles, who boldly declared, that our blessed Saviour had charged them to preach the gospel first to the Jews, but as they so obstinately rejected it, they were now to address themselves to the Gentiles; who hearing this, rejoiced exceedingly, magnifying the words of the Almighty, and many of them embraced the doctrines of the gospel.

Paul and Barnabas being driven from Antioch, retreated to Iconium, the metropolis of Lycaonia, a province of Lesser Asia, where they made many converts, both Jews and proselytes. But though they had gained a considerable part of the city to the faith, yet many continued in their infidelity: the old leaven of Jewish malice began again to ferment, and the unbelieving Jews, having stirred up many Gentiles against the apostles, at last prevailed on the multitude to stone them. But the apostles, having timely notice of their design, fled from the city, and travelled to Lystra, where they preached the gospel to the inhabitants, and those who dwelt in the adjacent country.

Among the converts at Lystra was a man who had been lame from his mother's womb, and never had walked. Paul,

perceiving that he had faith to be saved, cried in an audible voice to the man, *Stand upright on thy feet.* The words were no sooner pronounced, than his strength was at once restored, and he leaped up and walked.

The people who beheld this miracle well knew that it was not wrought by any human power; but having been initiated in the superstitious customs of the heathens, they cried out, *The Gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.* Accordingly they called Barnabas Jupiter, because of his venerable gravity, and Paul Mercury, from his eloquence. Nor was it long before the whole city resounded with acclamations; so that almost all the inhabitants gathered themselves together, and, preceded by the priests of Jupiter, and oxen dressed in garlands, they came to the house where the apostles were, intending to do sacrifice to them.

But as soon as Barnabas and Paul understood their intentions, they were greatly affected at this superstitious design; and rending their clothes to express their grief and abhorrence of the action, ran to them, crying out, "Ye men of Lystra, ye are mistaken in the object of your worship; for though we have done many miracles in the name, and by the power of Christ, yet we are no more than men, and subject to the same passions with yourselves, and preach unto you the glad tidings of salvation, that ye may forsake the vanities of this world, and turn to the living God, who created the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all the creatures they contain." This argument of the apostle's had the desired effect; and the people were at last, though with difficulty, persuaded to lay aside their intended idolatrous sacrifice.

But the malice of the Jews still pursued the apostles; for some of these bigoted Israelites coming from Antioch and Iconium, exasperated and stirred up the multitude; so that those very persons who could hardly be restrained from offering sacrifice to them, now used them like slaves, stoning them in so cruel a manner, that Paul was thought to be dead, and as such they dragged him out of the city; but while the Christians of Lystra were attending on his body, probably in order to carry him to the grave, he arose and returned with them into the city; and the next day departed with Barnabas to Derbe, where they preached the gospel, and converted many.

They soon, however, returned to Lystra, Iconium, Antioch, and Pisidia, confirming the Christians of those places in the faith, earnestly persuading them to persevere, and not to be discouraged with those troubles and persecutions, which would attend the profession of the gospel. And that the affairs of the church might be conducted with more regularity,

they ordained elders and pastors to teach, and to watch over them; and then left them to the protection of the Almighty, to whose care they recommended them by prayer and fasting. After leaving Antioch they passed through Pisidia, and came to Pamphylia: and after preaching the gospel at Perga, they went down to Attalia. Having thus finished the circuit of their ministry, they returned back to Antioch, in Syria, from whence they at first departed. Here they summoned the church, and gave them an account of their ministry, the success it had met in different parts, and how great a door had thus been opened for the conversion of the Gentile world.

While St. Paul continued at Antioch, that famous controversy, with regard to the observation of the Jewish ceremonies in the Christian dispensation, was set on foot by certain Jewish converts to the great disturbance of the whole church: and it was determined to send Paul and Barnabas to consult with the apostles and church at Jerusalem, that this affair might be settled on the most solid foundation. On their arrival at Jerusalem, they first addressed themselves to Peter, James, and John, the pillars of that church, by whom they were kindly entertained, and admitted to the right hand of fellowship: and perceiving by the account given them by St. Paul, that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to him, as that of the circumcision was to Peter, they agreed that Peter should preach to the Jews, and Paul to the Gentiles. This being determined, a council was summoned, wherein Peter declared his opinion, and Paul and Barnabas acquainted them with the great things God, by their ministry, had done among the Gentiles: a plain evidence that they were accepted by the Almighty, though uncircumcised, as well as the Jews with all their legal rights and privileges: accordingly it was unanimously determined, that the Gentiles were not under the obligation of the law of Moses, and therefore that some persons of their own church should be joined with Paul and Barnabas, to carry the decrees of the council at Antioch, for their farther satisfaction in this matter.

The controversy concerning the observation of Jewish ceremonies in the Christian church being decided in favour of St. Paul, he and his companions returned back to Antioch; and soon after Peter himself came down. On reading the decretal epistle in the Church, the converts conversed freely and inoffensively with the Gentiles till some of the Jews coming thither from Jerusalem, Peter withdrew his conversation, as it had been a thing unwarrantable and unlawful. By such a strange method of proceeding the minds

of many were dissatisfied, and their consciences very uneasy. St. Paul with the greatest concern observed it, and publicly rebuked Peter, with that sharpness and severity his unwarrantable practice deserved.

Soon after this, Paul and Barnabas resolved to visit the churches they had planted among the Gentiles, and Barnabas was desirous of taking with them his cousin Mark; but this Paul strenuously opposed, as he had left them in their former journey. This trifling dispute arose to such a height, that those two great apostles and fellow-labourers in the gospel parted; Barnabas taking Mark with him, repaired to Cyprus, his native country, and Paul having made choice of Silas, and recommended the success of his undertaking to the care of divine providence, set forward on his intended journey.

They first visited the churches of Syria and Cilicia, and then sailed to Crete, where Paul preached the gospel, and constituted Titus to be the first bishop and Pastor in the island. From hence Paul and Silas returned back into Cilicia, and came to Lystra, where they found Timothy, whose father was a Greek, but his mother a Jewish convert, and by her he had been brought up under all the advantages of a pious and religious education, especially with regard to the Holy Scriptures, which he had studied with the greatest assiduity and success. This person St. Paul designed for the companion of his travels, and a special instrument in the ministry of the gospel. But knowing that his being uncircumcised would prove a stumbling-block to the Jews, he caused him to be circumcised, being willing in lawful and indifferent matters to conform himself to the tempers and apprehensions of men, in order to save their souls.

Every thing being ready for their journey, St. Paul and his companions departed from Lystra, passing through Phrygia and Galatia, where the apostle was entertained with the greatest kindness and veneration, the people looking upon him as an angel sent from heaven; and being by revelation forbidden to go into Asia, he was commanded by a second vision to repair to Macedonia, to preach the gospel. Accordingly, he prepared to pass from Asia into Europe.

Here Luke joined them, and became ever after the inseparable companion of St. Paul, who being desirous of finding the speediest passage into Macedonia, took ship with Silas, Luke, and Timothy, and came to Samothracia, an island in the *Ægean* Sea, not far from Thrace; and the next day went to Neapolis, a port of Macedonia. Leaving Neapolis, they repaired to Philippi, the metropolis of that part of Macedonia, and a Roman colony, where they stayed some days.

In this city Paul preached in an oratory of the Jews, which was much frequented by devout women, many of whom became converts. As they were repairing to this place of worship, a damsel, who possessed a spirit of divination, by whom her masters acquired great advantage, followed Paul and his companions, crying out, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation." This she continued to do for several days together; but at length the apostle, in the name of Christ, commanded the spirit to come out of her; and that very instant the woman was relieved.

This miraculous cure proving a great loss to her masters, who acquired large gains from her soothsaying, they were filled with malice against the apostles; and, by their instigation, the multitude arose, and seized upon Paul and his companions, hurried them before the magistrates and governors; accusing them of introducing many innovations which were prejudicial to the state.

The magistrates being concerned for the tranquillity of the place, were very forward to punish the offenders, against whom great numbers of the multitude testified; and therefore commanded the officers to strip them, and scourge them severely, as seditious persons.

This was accordingly executed; after which the apostles were committed to close custody, and their feet made fast in the stocks. But at midnight they prayed and sung praises so loud, that they were heard in every part of the prison. Nor were their prayers offered to the throne of grace in vain: an earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, opened the doors, loosed the chains, and set the prisoners at liberty.

This convulsion of nature roused the gaoler from his sleep; and concluding from what he saw, that all the prisoners were escaped, he was going to put a period to his life; but Paul observing him, hastily cried out, *Do thyself no harm, for we are all here.* The keeper was now as greatly surprised at the goodness of the apostles, as he was before terrified at the thoughts of their escape: and calling for a light, he came immediately into the presence of the apostles, fell down at their feet, took them from the dungeon, brought them to his own house, washed their stripes, and begged them to instruct him in the knowledge of that God who was so mighty to save.

St. Paul readily granted his request, and replied, That, if he believed in Jesus Christ, he might be saved, with his whole house: accordingly the gaoler and his family were, after a competent instruction, baptized, and received as members of the church of Christ.

As soon as it was day, the magistrates either hearing what had happened, or reflecting on what they had done as too harsh and unjustifiable, sent their serjeant to the gaoler with orders to discharge the apostles. The gaoler joyfully delivered the message, and bid them *depart in peace*; but Paul, that he might make the magistrates sensible what injury they had done them, and how unjustly they had punished them without examination or trial, sent them word, that, as they thought proper to scourge and imprison Romans, contrary to the laws of the empire, he expected they should come themselves, and make them some satisfaction.

The magistrates were terrified at this message; well knowing how dangerous it was to provoke the formidable power of the Romans, who never suffered any freeman to be beaten uncondemned; they came therefore to the prison, and very submissively entreated the apostles to depart without any farther disturbance.

Leaving Philippi, where Paul and his companions had laid the foundation of a very eminent church, they proceeded to Thessalonica, the metropolis of Macedonia. In this city their doctrine was strenuously opposed by the Jews, who would not allow Jesus to be the Messiah, because of his ignominious death.

During the stay of the apostles at Thessalonica, they lodged in the house of a certain Christian named Jason, who entertained them very courteously. But the Jews gathered together a great number of lewd and wicked wretches, who beset the house of Jason, intending to take Paul, and deliver him up to an incensed multitude. But in this they were disappointed, Paul and Silas being removed from thence by the Christians, and concealed in some other part of the city.

Their fury, however, being exasperated at losing their prey, they seized on Jason, with some others of the brethren, and carried them before the magistrates of the city, accusing them of setting up Jesus as a king, in derogation of the emperor's dignity and authority. Jason and his companions were set at liberty only after they had given security for their appearance.

As soon as the tumult was over, the Thessalonians, who had been converted by them, sent away Paul and Silas by night to Beræa, a city about fifty miles south of Thessalonica, but out of the power of their enemies. Here also Paul's great love for his countrymen the Jews, and his earnest desire of their salvation, excited him to preach to them in particular; accordingly, he entered into their synagogue, and explained the gospel unto them, proving out of the Scriptures

of the Old Testament, the truth of the doctrines he advanced. These Jews were of a more ingenuous and candid temper than those of Thessalonica. They heard him, with great attention, expound and apply the Scriptures; they searched diligently, whether his proofs were proper and pertinent, and consonant to the sense of the texts he referred to: and having found every thing to be agreeable to what Paul had advanced, many of them believed; and several Gentiles followed their example, became obedient to the faith, among whom were several women of quality.

Paul leaving Berea, proceeded to Athens, where Silas and Timotheus were to repair to him as soon as possible.

While Paul continued at Athens, expecting the arrival of Silas and Timothy, he walked up and down the city, which he found miserably overrun with superstition and idolatry. The inhabitants were remarkably religious and devout; they had a great number of false gods, whom they adored: and so very careful were they, that no deity should want due honour for them, that they had an altar inscribed, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. A great variety of reasons are given for this inscription: some affirm, that it was the name which the Pagans generally gave to the god of the Jews; but others think that included all the gods of Asia, Europe, and Africa.

These superstitious practices grieved the spirit of the apostle; accordingly, he exerted all his strength for their conversion; he disputed on the Sabbath-days in the synagogues of the Jews; and at other times took all opportunities of preaching to the Athenians the coming of the Messiah, to save the world.

This doctrine was equally new and strange to the Athenians; and though they did not persecute him as the Jews did, yet his preaching Jesus was considered, by the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, as a fabulous legend; and by the more sober part as a discovery of some new gods, which they had not yet placed in their temples: and though they were not unwilling to receive any new deities, yet as the Areopagus, the supreme court of the city, was to judge of all gods, to whom public worship might be allowed, they brought him before those judges, to give account of his doctrine.

Paul being placed before the judges of this high assembly, readily gave them an account of his doctrine, in a grave and eloquent speech; wherein he did not tell them they were horrible and gross idolaters, lest he should offend them, and thereby prevent them from listening to his reason: but, having commended them for their religious dispositions, he took occasion, from the altar inscribed to the *unknown God*, to make

a proper defence of his doctrine. "I endeavour," said he, "only to explain that altar to you, and manifest the nature of that God whom you ignorantly worship. The true God is he that made the world, and all things therein; and who being Lord of all, dwells not in temples made with hands, nor is to be worshipped in lifeless idols. As he is the creator of all things, he cannot be confined to the workmanship of man, whether temples or statues; nor stand in need of sacrifices, since he is the fountain of life to all things. He made from one common original the whole race of mankind, and hath wisely determined their dependence on him, that they might be obliged to seek after him and serve him. A truth perceivable in the darkest state of ignorance, and acknowledged by one of your own poets. If this be the nature of God, it is surely the highest absurdity to represent him by an image of similitude. The divine patience hath been too much exercised already with such gross abuses in religion, but now expects a thorough reformation, having sent his Son Jesus Christ to make him known to the world, and at the same time to inform them that he hath appointed a day of general judgment, when the religion of mankind shall be tried by the test of the gospel, before his only-begotten Son, who is appointed sole judge of the quick and dead, and whose commission to that high office hath been ratified by the Almighty, in raising him from the dead."

On his mentioning the resurrection, some philosophers mocked and derided him; others, more modest, but not satisfied with the proofs he had given, gravely answered, "We would hear thee again of this matter." After which Paul departed from the court; but not without some success, for a few of his auditors believed and attended his instructions.

During St. Paul's stay at Athens, Timothy came to him out of Macedonia; and brought an account that the Christians at Thessalonica were under persecution from their fellow citizens ever since his departure: at which St. Paul was greatly concerned, and at first inclined to visit them in person, to confirm them in the faith; but being hindered by the enemies of the gospel, he sent Timothy to comfort them.

On Timothy's departure, St. Paul left Athens, and travelled to Corinth, a very populous place, and famous for its trade. Here he found Aquila and Priscilla his wife, lately come from Italy, having been banished from Rome, by the decree of Claudius. And they being of the same trade he himself had learned in his youth, he wrought with them, that he might not be burdensome to the new converts.

Here the apostle was joined by Silas and Timothy, who

assisted him in preaching to both Jews and Gentiles. Among the converts to the faith in this city were Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and Gaius, and Stephanus, who, with their families, were baptized, and admitted members of the Christian church.

But lest the behaviour of unbelievers should discourage Paul, our dear Redeemer appeared to him in a vision, and told him, that notwithstanding the bad success he had hitherto met with, there was a large harvest to be gathered in that place; that he should not be afraid of his enemies, but preach the gospel boldly and securely, for that he himself would protect and preserve him.

About this time he seems to have written his first epistle to the Thessalonians, Silas and Timothy being lately returned from thence, and delivered the message for which he had sent them thither. The principal design of this epistle is to confirm them in the belief of the Christian religion, and excite them to persevere in it, notwithstanding all the malice of their enemies, and the persecutions they must expect to suffer, and to instruct them in the duties of a religious life.

During the apostle's stay at Corinth, he wrote his second epistle to the Thessalonians, to supply his absence. In this epistle he again endeavours to confirm their minds in the truth of the gospel, and prevent their being shaken with those troubles, which the wicked and unbelieving Jews would be continually raising against them. And because some passages in his former epistle relating to the destruction of the Jews, had been misunderstood, as if the day of the Lord was near at hand, he rectifies these mistakes, and shows the signs that must precede our Lord's coming to judgment.

St. Paul on leaving the church at Corinth, took ship at Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, for Syria, taking with him Aquila and Priscilla, and on his arrival at Ephesus, he preached in the synagogue of the Jews, promising to return to them, after keeping the passover at Jerusalem. Accordingly he again took ship, and landed at Cæsarea, and from thence travelled to Jerusalem, where he kept the feast, visited the church, and then repaired to Antioch. Here he stayed some time, and then traversed the countries of Galatia and Phrygia, confirming the new converted Christians, till he came to Ephesus.

During the time he spent in this large circuit, providence took care of the churches of Ephesus and Corinth, by means of one Apollos, an eloquent Jew of Alexandria, and well acquainted with the law and writings of the prophets. This man coming to Ephesus, though he was only instructed in the

rudiments of Christianity, and John's baptism, yet he taught with great courage, and a most powerful zeal. After being fully instructed in the faith by Aquila and Priscilla, he passed over into Achaia, being furnished with recommendatory letters by the churches of Ephesus and Corinth. He was of the greatest service in Achaia, in watering what Paul had planted, confirming the disciples, and convincing the Jews, that Jesus was the true Messiah, promised in the Scriptures.

While Apollos was thus employed, St. Paul returned to Ephesus, where he fixed his abode for three years, bringing with him Gaius of Derbe, Aristarchus, a native of Thessalonica, Timotheus and Erastus of Corinth, and Titus. The first thing he did after his arrival was to examine certain disciples, *Whether they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed?* To which they answered, "That the doctrine they had received promised nothing of that nature, nor had they ever heard that such an extraordinary spirit had of late been bestowed upon the church."

This answer surprised the apostle, who asked them, in what name they had been baptized? since, in the Christian form, the name of the Holy Ghost was always expressed. They replied, that they had only received John's baptism; upon which the apostle informed them, that though John's baptism commanded nothing but repentance, yet it tacitly implied the whole doctrine of Christ and the Holy Ghost. When they heard this, they were baptized according to the form prescribed by Christ himself, that is, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and after the apostle had prayed and laid his hands upon them, they received the gift of tongues, and other miraculous powers.

After this, he continued for three months to dispute with the Jews, endeavouring to convince them of the truth of the Christian religion. But on account of their obstinacy and infidelity, he departed from their synagogue, and went to the school of one Tyrannus, where he preached the gospel for two whole years. During this time, the Almighty was pleased to testify the doctrine which St. Paul delivered by many miracles, several of which were of a peculiar nature; for he not only healed those that came to him, but if napkins were simply touched by him, and applied to the sick, their diseases instantly vanished, and evil spirits departed out of those that were possessed by them.

About this time the apostle wrote his epistle to the Galatians, in which he reproves them with some necessary severity for suffering themselves to be so easily seduced by the artifices of several impostors, who had found admittance into the

church since his departure. He refutes certain Judaical opinions that had corrupted them; vindicates the immediate receiving his commission from Christ; and, in the conclusion, instructs them in the rules and duties of a holy life.

During St. Paul's stay at Ephesus, an event occurred which was attended with great danger. In this city was the celebrated temple of Diana, a structure so magnificent for beauty, riches, and magnitude, that it was reckoned one of the seven wonders of the world. The image of the goddess being held in great veneration, the making of silver shrines or figures of the temple, proved the source of considerable business to the silversmiths of the city, of whom one Demetrius was chief. This man having called all the artists together, represented to them that the ruin of their gainful employment was inevitable, if Paul was suffered to bring their temple and goddess into contempt, by persuading the people that they were no gods which were made with hands. This speech fired the assembly with such zeal, that they cried out with one voice, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians!* The tumult quickly spread throughout the city, and as the multitude could not discover Paul, they seized two Macedonians of his company, and a converted Jew, with a design to throw them to the wild beasts. In the midst of this confusion, the town clerk of Ephesus, who endeavoured to quell the disturbance, addressed the crowd, telling them that the courts were open if Demetrius and his fraternity had any accusation against Paul and his companions, and that there was no necessity whatever for their publishing to the world at that time, that the Ephesians paid devotion to the great goddess Diana. The multitude being by this discourse convinced of the impropriety of their conduct, repaired peaceably to their respective habitations, and Paul's friends were set at liberty.

About this time Paul was informed of some disturbances in the church at Corinth, hatched and fomented by a company of false teachers crept in among them, who endeavoured to draw them into parties and factions, by persuading one company to be for Peter, another for Paul, and a third for Apollos. To cure these dissensions, St. Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians, wherein he reproves them for their schisms and parties, conjures them to peace and unity, corrects those gross corruptions that had been introduced among them, and particularly resolves those controversies wherein they had requested his advice and counsel. Soon after, Apollos determining to go to Crete, together with Zanos, St. Paul sent by them his Epistle to Titus, whom he had made bishop of that island, and had left there for pro-

pagating the gospel. In this Epistle he instructs him fully in the execution of his office, both with regard to himself and others.

Soon after the tumult at Ephesus, Paul called the Christians together, and took leave of them. He had spent almost three years at Ephesus, and founded a considerable church, of which he had ordained Timothy, the first bishop. He first travelled about two hundred miles northward, to Troas, before he took ship, expecting to meet Titus there. But missing him, he proceeded on his voyage to Macedonia.

On his arrival there, he preached the gospel in several places, even as far as Illyricum, now called Slavonia. During this journey he met with many troubles and dangers, *without were fightings, and within fears*; but God revived his spirits by the arrival of Titus, who gave him a pleasing account of the good effect his epistle had produced at Corinth. Titus came thither with contributions from the church at Corinth, and from the example of those liberal Christians, St. Paul stirred up the Macedonians to imitate their charity, intending to assist the poor Christians at Jerusalem.

During the stay of Titus in Macedonia, Paul wrote his second Epistle to the Corinthians, and sent it to them by Titus and Luke. About this time also he wrote his first epistle to Timothy, wherein he gives him directions how to conduct himself in the discharge of that great office and authority in the church committed to his care.

During his stay in Greece, he went to Corinth, where he wrote his famous epistle to the Romans, in which his principal intention is fully to state and determine the great controversy between the Jews and Gentiles, with regard to the obligations of the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law, and those principal and material points of doctrine depending upon it, namely, Christian liberty, the use of indifferent things, and the like.

St. Paul being now determined to return into Syria, in order to convey the contributions to the brethren at Jerusalem, set out on his journey; but being informed that the Jews had formed a design of killing and robbing him by the way, he returned back into Macedonia, and came to Philippi, from thence he went to Troas, where he stayed seven days. Here he preached to them on the Lord's day, and continued his discourse till midnight, being himself to depart in the morning. The length of his discourse, and time of the night, caused some of his audience to be overtaken with sleep. and among them a young man named Eutychus, who fell from the third story, and was taken up

dead ; but the apostle, by his prayers to the throne of grace, presently restored him to life and health.

The night being thus spent in holy exercises, St. Paul took his leave of the brethren in the morning, travelling on foot to Assos, a seaport town, whither he had before sent his companions by sea. From thence they sailed to Mitylene, a city in the isle of Lesbos, and afterwards came to Miletus, not putting in at Ephesus, because the apostle was resolved, if possible, to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

On his arrival at Miletus, he sent to Ephesus, to summon the elders of the church ; and reminded them how faithfully and affectionately he had discharged the offices of his ministry, and how incessantly he had laboured for the good of the souls of men : urging both the Jews and Gentiles to repentance, and reformation of life, and perseverance in the faith of Christ : that he was now going up to Jerusalem, where he was ignorant of what might befall him, except what had been foretold him by those endued with the prophetic gifts of the Holy Ghost ; namely, that afflictions and imprisonment would attend him. But that this gave him no concern, being willing to lay down his life whenever the gospel required it, and fully determined to serve faithfully his great Lord and Master.

Paul, with his companion, now departed from Miletus, and arrived at Coos, from whence they sailed the next day to Rhodes, a large island in the *Ægean* sea. Leaving this place, they came to Patara, the metropolis of Lycia, where they went on board another vessel bound for Tyre in Phenicia. On his arrival, he visited the brethren there, and continued with them a week, and was advised by some of them, who had the gift of prophecy, not to go up to Jerusalem. But the apostle would by no means abandon his design, or refuse to suffer any thing, provided he might spread the gospel of his Saviour. Finding all persuasions were in vain, they jointly accompanied him to the shore, where he kneeled down, and prayed with them ; and after embracing him with the utmost affection, he went on board, and came to Ptolemais, and the next day to Cesarea.

During their stay at this place, Agabus, a Christian prophet, came thither from Judea, who, taking Paul's girdle, bound his own hands and feet with it, signifying, by this symbol, that the Jews would bind Paul in that manner, and deliver him over to the Gentiles. Whereupon both his own companions and the Christians of Cesarea earnestly besought him that he would not go up to Jerusalem. But the apostle asked them, if they intended by these passionate dissuasives to add more affliction to his sorrow ? " For I am ready

(continued he,) not only to be bound, but also to die, at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus." And all things being ready, Paul and his companions set forward on their journey.

On his arrival at Jerusalem, he found the malice of his enemies unabated, and many of his friends alienated from him on account of his lax notions of the Mosaic ritual. He therefore, with the advice of the Apostle James, joined himself with four persons who were to take the Nazarite vows, that he might perform the rites and ceremonies with them, and prove that he conformed to the law. This, however, did not diminish the hatred of the Jews. On his appearance in the temple, they seized, and would have put him to death, but for Lysias, the commander of the Roman cohort in the citadel, who brought soldiers to his rescue. Thus protected, he addressed the mob, giving an account of his life and conversion, and his appointment to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, all which they heard attentively, till he stated that under the gospel the Gentiles were on a par with the Jews, when all their feelings of national bigotry burst forth in a tempest of execration and fury.

Lysias now had him brought within the castle to be scourged, that he might be made to confess his crime; but Paul asserted his privileges as a Roman citizen, whom it was unlawful to bind or scourge. Next day before the Sanhedrim he defended his conduct, and avowed his belief in a bodily resurrection, which occasioned such a fierce controversy between the Pharisees who favoured this doctrine, and the Sadducees who opposed it, that Lysias, fearing he might be torn to pieces among them, gave orders to remove him into the fort. Above forty of the Jews formed a conspiracy to assassinate him, but his nephew having heard of it, reported it both to Paul and Lysias, when the latter sent the apostle under escort during the night to Felix, the procurator of the province, at Cesarea. Here Paul and his accusers were heard before Felix, but though his defence was unanswerable, the procurator fearing to give the Jews offence, came to no decision, and Paul was retained in bonds. Some time after he was again brought before Felix and his wife Drusilla, on which occasion he discoursed so strongly on morality, in which his audience were notoriously deficient, that Felix trembled, and hastily sent him from his presence.

Shortly after this, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, before whom the Jews again brought their charges against Paul, and who was so inclined to favour the Jews, that the apostle felt himself constrained to appeal to Cæsar. To

gratify King Agrippa and his wife Bernice, who had come to Cesarea to visit Festus, Paul was again brought before the governor. He now recapitulated the leading points in his history, and stated his views and designs in such a manner, as to make a considerable impression on the mind of King Agrippa, and draw from him the well-known sentence—"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

Paul having appealed to Cæsar, it was necessary that he should go to Rome, and thither accordingly Festus had him conveyed. His voyage was a long and disastrous one. Leaving Cesarea, they coasted along Syria to Sidon, then crossed to Myra, a port of Lycia; thence to Cnidus, from which, on account of unfavourable winds, they struck across to Crete, and with difficulty reached the Fair Haven, a port on the southern part of that island, near the town of Lasea. There Paul urged the centurion under whom he and his fellow-prisoners were placed to winter, but the place not being very suitable, and the weather improving, they again set sail for Phœnice, another port on the same island, where they could winter with safety. Scarcely, however, had they left port, when a tempest arose, at the mercy of which they were driven for fourteen days in a westerly direction, until they were cast on the coast of Malta, where they suffered shipwreck, but without any loss of life. Hospitably received by the natives, they abode there three months, during which time Paul preached the gospel, and performed many miracles among the people.

On the approach of spring, they set sail in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the island, for Syracuse, thence crossed to Rhegium in Italy, and thence to Puteoli, from which they journeyed to Rome. Here Paul was delivered by the centurion to the captain of the guard, who permitted him to dwell in his own hired house under the surveillance of a soldier. And thus he continued for two years, preaching the kingdom of God, and writing for the use of the church, no man forbidding him.

By what means Paul was delivered from the accusation of the Jews we have no account; but it is supposed that, not having sufficient proof of what they alleged against him, or finding that it was no violation of the Roman law, they durst not implead him before the emperor, and so permitted him to be discharged.

After leaving Italy, Paul, accompanied by Timothy, prosecuted his long intended journey into Spain, and according to several writers, crossed the sea, and preached the gospel in Britain. He continued in these western parts for eight or

nine months, after which he repaired to Sicily, Greece, and Crete. He afterwards went to Rome, where, with Peter, he was cast into prison, in the general persecution raised against the Christians, under pretence that they had set fire to the city. It is uncertain how long he remained in prison, nor do we know whether he was scourged before his execution; but authorities agree that he was beheaded three miles from Rome, and was buried in the Via Ostiensis, about two miles from Rome, where, about the year 317, Constantine the Great built a stately church over his grave, and adorned it with a hundred marble columns, and beautified it with the most exquisite workmanship.

St. Paul seems, indeed, to have been eminently fitted for the apostleship of the Gentiles, to contend with and confute the grave and the wise, the acute and the subtle, the sage and the learned of the heathen world, and to wound them with arrows from their own quiver. He seldom, indeed, made use of learning and philosophy, it being more agreeable to the designs of the gospel, to confound the wisdom and learning of the world by the plain doctrine of the cross.

What he taught to others he practised himself; his "conversation was in heaven," and his desires were "to depart, and to be with Christ:" and hence it is very probable, that he always led a single life, though some of the ancients rank him among the married apostles.

His kindness and charity were remarkable; he had a compassionate tenderness for the poor, and a quick sense of the wants of others. To what church soever he came, it was always one of his first cares to make provision for the poor, and to stir up the bounty of the rich and wealthy: nay, he worked often with his own hands, not only to maintain himself, but also to help and relieve the poor. But his charity to the souls of men was infinitely greater, fearing no dangers, refusing no labours, going through good and evil report, that he might gain men over to the knowledge of the truth, and bring them out of the crooked paths, and place them in the straight way that leadeth to life eternal.

THE END.

